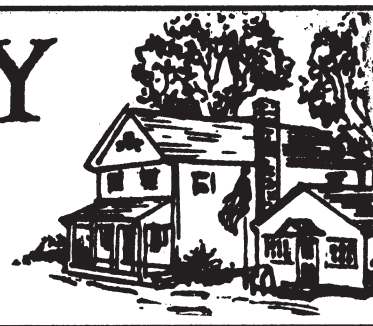




MONTEREY NEWS

October 2007
VOLUME XXXVII · Number 10



The Town

Director of Operations

Director of Operations Maynard Forbes reports that work on Sandisfield Road is progressing with the paving of swales and drainage ditches. In preparation for winter, just a few turns of the calendar pages away, bids for road sand were received, with J. Donovan & Sons low bidder. Here's an FYI regarding winter road maintenance. Salt is added to sand and used only on the dirt roads around town. Straight salt is used on paved roads. The reason for this, according to Forbes, is that

sand acts as an abrasive on the asphalt, it provides only temporary traction, and it has to be cleaned up in the spring.

Forbes also reported that because of staffing changes at National Grid, our electric company, they were unaware of a dozen or so trees in town that they need to remove. They have now made a site inspection and have turned the job over to a tree company. There are downed trees in Rawson Brook to be removed; however, a bigger machine is needed to do the job and an extension of an emergency order will need to be made to the Conservation Commission.

Police Matters

Chief Backhaus reports the Police Department was kept busy answering a wide variety of calls over the last few weeks. They responded to a medical call, several false alarms, several motor vehicle related incidents, abandoned 911 calls, rabid raccoon reports, assistance to police departments of the neighboring towns of Tyringham, New Marlborough, and Great Barrington, and a missing canoe, to name a few.

He also received a complaint regarding the storage of construction debris,



Nancy Kalodner

I Love Monterey Day 2007: Monterey lights up as the band lights out. (Thanks to Nancy Kalodner for the photo.)

which was referred to the Building Commissioner, Don Torrico, who would need the complaint to be in writing in order to determine if there were any zoning violations.

Backhaus also received a complaint about an unregistered boat that was moored at Lake Garfield. The boat is gone now, but the mooring remains and questions arose about mooring permits.

Firemen Training Facility

Residents have appeared before the Select Board with questions regarding a proposed firemen training structure to be built behind the firehouse pavilion. As Maynard Forbes was present for his weekly meeting with the Board and is also a member of the Fire Company, he was able to answer Suzanne Hoppenstedt's query about the use of the building. Forbes explained that ideally the structure would be two stories, multileveled with different types of roofs. There would be a "burn room" for starting controlled fires. The Fire Company would also hope to conduct mock search and rescue drills. (It should be noted that the Fire Company has not applied yet for a building permit.) Selectman Sylbert reminded everyone that while the town owns the firefighting

equipment, the Monterey Fire Co., Ltd., owns the firehouse and property and the Fire Company is raising its own money to fund this project. Any questions regarding the Fire Company's plans should be directed to Chief Ray Tryon.

The Boat Ramp/Beach

Keeping options open, the Select Board asked Town Counsel Jeremiah Pollard to research the ownership of land abutting the beach. His research to date has not confirmed ownership. Drawing on found archived records dating back to the 1970s and County Commission maps and additional research, he may be able to unravel a complicated knot of land transfers. Pollard also suggested to the Board that the town have a survey done of the beach.

Animal Control Officer

Nora Hayes, our Animal Control Officer, came in to discuss the recent article pertaining to her in the *Monterey News*. She began by stating her reputation was very important to her and that she did not agree with the article. The reported lack of communication between all the parties involved was due in part to poor pager reception. New pagers are being programmed that should work.

In the case of a serious dog bite, the hospital is supposed to fax the ACO immediately with the information. In this

most recent case, according to Hayes, it was a week before she was notified by the hospital. In the other case information was passed to her supervisors, The Board of Health, but not passed to her. To paraphrase Hayes, "I didn't fumble, I didn't know."

Hayes asked for support from the town for a program she would like to present to children addressing how to approach dogs, how to prevent dog bites, and what to do if a dog does bite. The Select Board agreed to help her with this project.

Town Hall

The discord at Town Hall remains a topic for discussion at the Select Board meetings. Jeremiah Pollard, Town Counsel, was asked to weigh in on the subject. The Board has three options for dealing with conflict between elected officials and town employees. They are mediation, investigation with the report written up in the Town Report, or removal of the elected official through due process. The Board and Pollard discussed at length the investigative process whereby witnesses could be called in and interviewed. Results of this type of investigation would then be made public through a report published in the Town Report. Pollard did caution that the Select Board could not force anyone, elected or appointed, to attend such a meeting or participate in the process.

— Deborah D. Mielke

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The School Budget Issue

At a special town meeting on September 7, Monterey voters resoundingly refused to appropriate an additional \$68,852 toward the fiscal year 2008 district school budget on top of the \$990,795 already approved at the May 5th annual town meeting. Monterey's additional assessment came up because at a May 9th town meeting Sheffield withdrew at the eleventh hour from the existing district school budget assessment agreement.

At the September 7th meeting, Select Board Chair Jon Sylbert first gave the background of the school budget issue. In 1953 Monterey, Sheffield, New Marlborough, and Egremont agreed to form the Southern Berkshire Regional School District (SBRSD); Alford joined the agreement in 1954. The agreement, which has since been amended several times (printed in its entirety, with amendments, on the following pages), set forth two methods for how costs will be assessed to the member towns, one for the annual operating budgets and one for the major capital costs involved in construction of the new district school campus in Sheffield. The capital costs are assessed proportionately by dividing the equalized valuation of each town by the total of the valuations of all the towns. The operating budget assessment was to be made each year based on the proportionate number of students the previous year from each member town; this clause has been amended several times, most

recently in 2001, when after much negotiation it was agreed that the assessment would be based on a rolling average of the number of pupils from each town for a specified number of years, recalculated annually. This agreement was supposed to remain in effect until 2011. (Note: even pupils who opt out of the district are paid for by the district and counted in the assessment.)

In 1993 the commonwealth decided to standardize the budget allocation assessment method and set up what is called the "statutory method," which is based on 1) total assessed value of the town; 2) average income of town residents; and 3) number of students from town. Alternate methods could still be used, but in 1995 the commonwealth amended the statute to say that while alternate methods could still be used, the alternate method would have to be approved by all member towns of a district, whereas before it had been



Nancy Kalodner

Susan Sellew, Ellen Pearson, and Liz Goodman.

only a certain percentage. In any areas of conflict between the statutory method and an alternate method, the statute takes precedent.

This year Sheffield, which has the highest number of students in the district, saw that if the statutory method were used instead of the existing alternate agreement, its assessment would be lower by \$320,000. The Sheffield voters approved this lower assessment at their May town meeting, thereby dissolving the alternate method agreement and leaving Monterey, Egremont, and New Marlborough to make up the shortfall (Alford's share stays about the same either way)—hence the additional \$68,852 assessment to Monterey. Four of the five town in the district have to agree to the statutory method for it to take effect, and as Monterey voters came to the September 7th meeting, Sheffield, Alford, and Egremont (which approved their additional \$117,807 assessment at an August 28th special town meeting) had already

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approved it, meaning it would take effect if either Monterey or New Marlborough passed the additional appropriation (New Marlborough's special town meeting will be on October 9).

Sylbert, in a precise and well-reasoned argument, first assured the citizens that the school budget for this year is secure and that the children's education will not suffer due to the budget impasse. The state has mandated that the statutory method be used until the dispute is resolved, and each month 1/12th of this year's budget is being paid by the member towns using this method.

Sylbert said that if both Monterey and New Marlborough reject accepting the appropriations called for by the statutory method, the budget would go back to the school committee for reevaluation; the committee could then resubmit the same or a revised budget to the five towns. The committee has 10 members: 4 from Sheffield, 2 from New Marlborough, 2 from Egremont, 1 from Monterey, and 1 from Alford. Any budget must be approved by at least a 7 to 3 margin, so Sheffield has enough votes to filibuster or reject any proposal.

If no budget is agreed to by December 1, the state Department of Education (DOE) will step in, dissolve the school committee, and take over its functions. This has never happened before, but Sylbert said DOE has made it clear it would not decrease the budget.

Sylbert went on to say that since the quality of the children's education is not at stake, there are good reasons for rejecting the requested additional appropriation and that this was our only chance to avoid switching to the less equitable statutory

assessment and that it were accepted there would be no going back. His reasons fell into three areas.

First, financial concerns. Both the Select Board and the Finance Committee were against the appropriation because it would place severe financial strain on the town, not just in this fiscal year (which would be partly made up for by a "pothole grant" from the state), but for years to come, requiring budget overrides.

Second, what is the best strategy for dealing with the situation? Sylbert felt that we have some possible bargaining chips, but only if the appropriation were rejected. One is that the threat of losing control of the school committee might perhaps make Sheffield willing to negotiate.

Sylbert's third area of concern was fairness. He pointed out that the bond (capital) costs assessment part of the SBRSD agreement is very unfavorable to Monterey, and we have paid \$1 to \$2 million more over the term of the bonds (taken out for building construction) than what would seem to be our fair share. We have paid so far about 22 percent of the capital costs but have only about 3 percent of the student population. Since Sheffield has withdrawn from one part of the district agreement, Monterey might instigate a renegotiation of the capital costs assessment agreement, another possible bargaining chip. But this would have to be done now because the bonds will be paid off by 2011. Sylbert also pointed out that the assessed valuation of Sheffield looks very low compared to the assessed value of the other four towns; Monterey, the smallest in area except for Alford, has the second highest assessed value. Monterey and New Marlborough have assessed values

that are about 80 percent of Sheffield's, which has a larger area, larger population, and more houses.

After Sylbert's presentation, Valerie Spriggs, SBRSD Superintendent spoke. Her main concern is maintaining an adequate budget for the schools. She said that good new teachers have been hired and programs strengthened, and she fears losing these gains. Her main argument for agreeing to the statutory method is to keep local control of the school board; she said that if the state takes over the district it could set policies that might not be appropriate for our circumstances.

Extensive discussion followed. Most of those who spoke agreed with Sylbert's arguments and were upset about the way the situation had come about. Those who spoke in favor of the appropriation expressed concern about maintaining the quality of education and what would happen if we lost local control of the school committee.

As it grew late, the question was called, and in a secret ballot the appropriation was rejected by a vote of 93 yeas, 8 nays.

Now we have to await the outcome of New Marlborough's October 9th meeting.

— Will Marsh



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The school budget issue is much with us now, so it seems worthwhile to print here the agreement that the district operates under, even though I have to ask readers to put up with what looks like a wall of type. I would like to hear if you find this sort of information helpful or just dull as ditchwater. — Ed.

**REGIONAL AGREEMENT ESTABLISHING
THE SOUTHERN BERKSHIRE REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT**

Established May 28, 1953

1. THE DISTRICT.

A Regional School District (hereinafter referred to as the District) is hereby established under the provisions of Sections 14 and 15 of Chapter 71 of the General Laws and any amendments thereto, consisting of the Towns of Alford, Egremont, Monterey, New Marlborough and Sheffield (hereinafter referred to as the member towns). Said District shall be a body politic and corporate with all the powers and duties conferred by this agreement and by law upon regional district school committees and with such other powers and duties as may hereafter be conferred upon said District by law and by the member towns by amendment of this agreement or otherwise. As Amended.

2. THE COMMITTEE.

The powers and duties of the District shall be exercised by and vested in a Regional District School Committee (hereinafter referred to as the Committee). The Committee shall consist of 10 members: one from Alford, two from Egremont, one from Monterey, two from New Marlborough and four from Sheffield. As Amended.

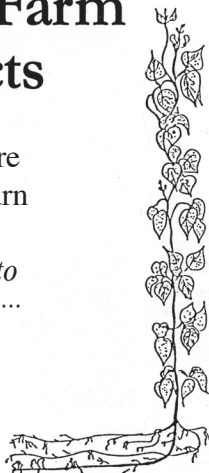
- a. The Selectmen of each member town (-or such other body as a town shall lawfully establish for such purpose) shall, in accordance with any procedure established from time to time by such town (or, if none, any established by the Selectmen or such other body), appoint the representative(s) of such town to the Committee. As Amended by Court Ruling of 6/18/98.
- b. Terms of office for town representatives to the school committee shall be two years. The term expiration date of each town representative in office as of February 26, 1998 shall be unaffected by this amendment, and incumbents in those offices shall be entitled to continue to serve through the scheduled expiration of their terms. As Amended by Court Ruling of 6/18/98.
- c. Immediately following the 1998 annual town elections, the Selectmen of each member town (or such other body as a town shall lawfully establish for such purpose) shall appoint person(s) (who may, unless otherwise prohibited by the Regional Agreement, have been the most recent incumbent(s) to fill any vacant but unexpired term(s) and any new term(s), as representative(s) of that town to the Committee. As Amended by Court Ruling of 6/18/98.
- d. No member of the Committee may serve for more than three terms consecutively.
- e. If any vacancy occurs on the Committee, said vacancy shall be filled within 30 days by appointment by the Selectmen (or such other body as a town shall lawfully establish for such purpose) of the town in which the vacancy occurs. The appointee shall serve the remainder of the original unexpired term, if any. As Amended. >

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3. THE DISTRICT SCHOOLS.

As soon as practicable the Committee shall acquire by purchase or otherwise land in the Town of Sheffield, as near as practicable to the population and geographical center of the District, and shall proceed with the construction, equipping and furnishing of a new school building. Said building shall include necessary facilities to house grades 7-12 for the entire District and, in addition, shall include four classrooms to house fifth and sixth grade students. The District shall thereafter construct and equip such additional school buildings as may be necessary.

- a. The District shall maintain and operate at least one elementary school which shall contain any individual grade or combination of grades among kindergarten and fourth grade inclusive in each of the member towns except as hereinafter provided. The individual grade or grades between kindergarten and the fourth grade inclusive to be so maintained or operated shall be determined from time to time by the School Committee in its discretion, and the member towns hereby give consent thereto, provided, however, that any member town with the approval of the Southern Berkshire Regional School District Committee may vote at any special or annual meeting in such town to discontinue the operation of the sole remaining school or kindergarten located within such member town. In each such instance the Southern Berkshire-Regional-School District Committee shall provide that suitable school facilities for students attending or entitled to attend such school, or schools be made available for them. The District shall assume all expenses of operation and maintenance of said schools and shall pay for insurance coverage or reimburse the member towns for any premiums paid by them. As Amended.

4. COSTS.

For the purpose of apportionment among member towns of the district, costs shall be classified as capital costs, operating costs, and transportation costs.

- a. Capital costs shall include cost of site, construction, laying out playgrounds and athletic fields, original grading, original equipment, and other costs incurred to put a new school plant into operation. Capital costs shall also include interest on indebtedness incurred to meet these outlays and the expense incident to the preparation, issuing, and marketing of bonds and other obligations. All subsequent improvements to the school plant which would be capitalized according to sound accounting practices shall be treated as capital costs.
- b. Each member town's proportionate share of the annual capital costs shall be determined to the nearest one hundredth of one percent by dividing the equalized valuation of that town by the total of the equalized valuations of all of the member towns of the District. (Equalized valuation figures shall be as set forth in Chapter 559, Acts of 1945, or such later equalized valuation as may be from time to time enacted by the General Court of the Commonwealth.)
- c. The payments of proportionate shares of said capital costs of each of the member towns for each year shall be made by the respective town treasurers by check payable to the District not later than 15 days preceding the date on which any bonds mature or interest becomes due, except that payments for any such debt falling due in January shall be made on or before the day preceding said maturity.
- d. Operating costs shall include all estimated expenses of the District except capital and transportation costs, including but not limited to salaries, administration expenses, wages, textbooks, supplies, additions to current equipment, repairs, maintenance and interest on temporary notes issued in anticipation of revenue by the District.

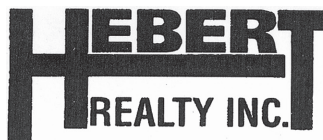
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- e. Each member town's share of the total operating costs of the Regional District schools for each fiscal year shall be determined on a per pupil basis, by apportioning the total budgeted operating costs among the several towns in that proportion which the total enrollment in the District schools from each town on **October 1st** *of the previous calendar year bears to the total enrollment in the District schools on the same date. **(This section superseded by Educational Reform Bill of 1993.)** * As Amended.
- f. The District shall arrange for necessary transportation for pupils from all member towns attending the Regional District schools under provisions of applicable General Laws and special acts.
- g. Each member town's share of the total transportation costs shall be apportioned among the member towns in such a manner as to conform with the provisions of applicable General Laws and special acts.
- h. The payment for proportionate shares of said estimated operating and transportation costs of each of the member towns for each year shall be made, upon certification by the District treasurer as specified in section 8(s) below by the respective town treasurer by check payable to the District in four equal installments on the fifteenth day of March, May, August and November.

5. WITHDRAWAL FROM THE DISTRICT.

Any member town may petition to withdraw from the District under terms stipulated in a proposal to withdraw provided (1) that the town seeking to withdraw has paid over to the District any operating costs for which it became liable as a member of the District, and (2) that said town shall remain liable to the district for its share of the indebtedness of the District outstanding at the time of such withdrawal, and for the interest thereon, to the same extent and in the same manner as though the town had not withdrawn from the district, except that such liability shall be reduced by any amount which such town has paid over at the time of withdrawal and which has been applied to the payment of such indebtedness or interest.

- a. Said petitioning town shall cease to be a member town if the proposal to withdraw is approved by a majority of the Committee members from the remaining towns, and by the town proposing to withdraw, in the following manner: said proposal to withdraw shall be placed upon a printed ballot at an annual town meeting of the town proposing to withdraw and such withdrawal shall be come effective if it receives a majority of the votes cast thereon.
- b. Money received by the District from the withdrawing town for payment of funded indebtedness or interest thereon shall be used for such purposes only

6. ADMISSION OF OTHER TOWNS.

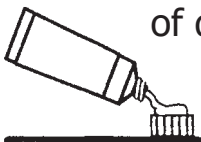
Any town may petition, by majority vote at an annual or special town meeting or by a petition bearing the signatures of a majority of the registered voters of the petitioning town, to become a member town in the District under terms stipulated in a proposed amendment to the agreement. Said petitioning town shall become a member town if the proposed amendment is approved by the Committee and accepted by the petitioning town and each member town, and provided further that the petitioning town shall also accept the agreement with any amendments thereto, approval by the Committee to be by a majority vote of the full membership, and acceptance by the petitioning town and by the member towns to be by majority vote at an annual or special town meeting in the manner provided in section 7 (b).

7. AMENDMENTS.

Except in matters relating to the payment or provision for payment of all bonded obligations of the District as provided for in section 4, this agreement may be amended from time to time by the following procedure: >

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- a. A proposal for amendment may be initiated by a signed petition bearing the signatures of 20 percent of the registered voters of any member town; or bearing the signatures of 200 registered voters of the District; said petition shall contain, at the end thereof, a statement by the qualified town clerk or clerks that such names as have been placed thereon are the names of registered voters and that the signatures appear to be genuine. In the alternative an amendment may be initiated by a majority of all of the members of the District Committee.
- b. Said proposal for amendment shall be presented to the secretary of the Committee who shall, within one week, notify the selectmen of each of the member towns that said proposal for amendment to this agreement has been received and said selectmen shall include said proposal in the warrant for their next annual or a special town meeting and shall direct the town clerk to place the proposal upon a printed ballot. When the member towns, by a majority vote in each town shall favor the amendment, said amendment shall be adopted thereby and made apart of this agreement.

8. THE BUDGET.

Annually, the Committee shall prepare a tentative operating budget for the ensuing fiscal year. Said tentative budget shall be posted in the town hall of each member town, shall be published at least once in a newspaper in general circulation in the District and copies shall be mailed to the chairman of the board of selectmen and the chairman of the finance committee in each member town. Said tentative budget shall contain a notice stating when and where a public hearing will be held thereon. Said hearing shall be held at least five days prior to adoption of the budget. Upon request of the finance committee of any member town the Committee shall arrange to meet with said finance committee for the purpose of discussing the aforementioned tentative budget. Said budget shall be in reasonable detail, itemized as follows: general control; expenses of instruction; operation of school plant, maintenance of school plant, auxiliary agencies; outlay; debt and interest charges; miscellaneous; the last named to specify all items costing \$100 or more. All non recurring expenditures shall be itemized. From the total of said budget there may be deducted any surplus of receipts for the preceding year over the costs as expenses for that year. As Amended.

- a. The costs and expenses of the District, as set forth in the operating and maintenance budget, shall be apportioned among the member towns in the manner set forth in section 4 (e) and, together with transportation costs, apportioned among the member towns in the manner set forth in section 4 (g). As Amended.
- b. The Regional School Committee of the Regional School District shall adopt such annual operating and maintenance budget not later than 45 days prior to the earliest date on which the first business session of the annual town meeting of any member town is held but not later than March 31 st of any year, provided that such annual budget need not be adopted prior to February 1st of any year, and the amounts of said annual budget so apportioned for each town in the District shall be certified to the treasurers of such towns within 30 days from the date on which said annual budget is adopted. As Amended.

THE ANNUAL REPORT.

The Committee shall submit an annual report to each of the member towns, containing a detailed financial statement, and a statement showing the method by which the annual charges assessed against each town were computed, together with such

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additional information relating to the operation and maintenance of the Regional District schools as may be deemed necessary by the selectmen of any member town or by the Committee.

10. VOCATIONAL COURSES.

The Committee may, at its discretion, include in the curriculum of the District schools independent distributive occupations, industrial, agricultural, and household arts schools under Chapter 74 and practical art classes under Section 14 of said Chapter 74.

Note: Photostat copies of the enabling legislation creating this agreement are kept in safety deposit boxes of the school district.

AMENDMENTS TO SO. BERKSHIRE REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT AGREEMENT

- Apr. 6, 1954 Town of Alford enters. Amends sections 1 and 2.
- Acts of 1973 Date of annual organizational meeting of the School Committee thereby changed. Amends sections 2© and 8 (a).
(Ch. 1025) School Committee adopts new organization meeting date as of August 21, 1975. School Committee adopts new budget schedule as of January 24, 1974, adding section 8(b) for this purpose.
- May, 1975 Operation of elementary schools in the several member towns. Amends section 3(a). Amendment of the original 3(a) adopted by School Committee April 4, 1974 and voted by the member towns in May, 1974 is further amended by School Committee action of March 13, 1975 for purpose of clarifying the language of this amendment. Member towns ratify this in annual elections of 1975.
- May, 1995 Date of Official Enrollment Count Changed to October 1. Amends Section 4(e) by providing that the District's official enrollment count be October 1, changing the date from the previously existing January 1. Amendment adopted by School Committee September 1, 1994 and voted by member towns at annual town meetings in May of 1995.
- June 8, 1998 Method of Selecting School Committee Members Changed to Appointive Process: Amends Section 2, "The Committee", to provide that School Committee members be appointed by their respective town select boards. (Per United States District Court, District of Massachusetts, Judgment, Case #96-30115-MAP)
- May, 2001 Towns Vote to Calculate Each Member Town's Operating Budget Contribution based on a Rolling Average of total pupil enrollment (per ballot, attached). Agreement effective FY'03 through FY'11.



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Come Swing at the Firemen's Ball

The Monterey Fire Company will be holding its 8th Annual Firemen's Ball at the Monterey Firehouse on Saturday, October 13. Always a highlight of Monterey's autumn, the Ball will once again host the Carlin Big Band and will honor all firefighters and other emergency personnel throughout Berkshire County.

The evening begins at 6:00 p.m. with hors d'oeuvres, followed by dinner and dancing. The theme this year is the 1930s ... dress uniforms, period dress and festive party-wear is encouraged. The cost is \$45 per couple, and reservations may be made by calling 528-3136.

For those whose dancing skills are somewhat rusty, the Fire Company will be hosting 4 informal "practice/polish" evenings of pre-Ball dancing: Tuesday and Thursday evenings, October 2, 4, 9 and 11, at 6:45 p.m. in the Firehouse. Good music, space to dance and get ready for the big evening.

See you at the Ball!



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Wendy Tryon
Certified Horticulturist

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Monterey Democratic Town Committee to Reorganize

The Monterey Democratic Town Committee is reorganizing in preparation for the Massachusetts Presidential Primary, to be held on Tuesday, March 4, 2008. It is from that ballot that town committee members are elected for four-year terms.

We are looking forward to increasing the size of our committee from 24 to 35 members. Therefore, I want to explain the process and encourage anyone interested in participating on our committee to notify me.

There are three ways to run for town committee. The first method is one that the incumbent members of our current committee will use. We will form our own slate and are inviting interested persons to join our slate by contacting me. The second method involves forming another slate with a minimum of three candidates. The third method is for a candidate to run as an individual.

Any citizen in Monterey who has been registered as a Democrat by September 1, 2007, or a newly registered Democrat voter may be a candidate for the committee. One must not have been enrolled in another political party during the one-year period prior to November 30, 2007.

Cultural Council Grant Applications Due Oct. 15

Monterey Cultural Council grant applications for 2008 are due by Monday, October 15. Forms are available online at mass-culture.org and in the Town Hall. Each year the Massachusetts Cultural Council allocates funds to each town in the state to make its own grants to arts, humanities, and interpretive science projects that benefit the local community. This year's allocation to Monterey is \$4,000. The Council welcomes public input and ideas at any time, especially as it plans a new year's allocation, either by attending a meeting or mailing a message P.O. Box 282.

This is an open invitation to all Democrats to join our committee. This coming election year is crucial to the future of our nation. I hope that many of you are interested in helping us with this task. If you would like to be on our slate please contact me. I will need to know of your intent before November 9, 2007.

If you prefer to form another slate or run as an individual, Barbara Swann can provide you with the papers and information you will need.

— Muriel Lazzarini, Chair
Monterey Democratic Town Committee
528-5796 or malazz@verizon.net

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Community Potluck Dinners Resume Oct. 10

On Wednesday, October 10, we will kick off the new season of Monterey Community Potluck Dinners. Sean Cowhig, the superintendant of the Stockbridge Management Unit of the Trustees of Reservations, will introduce us to the mission of the Trustees, which is a nonprofit private conservation institute and a resource for local organizations for preserving land.

The Monterey Potluck Dinners will be held on the second Wednesday of each month, October through May, in the Fellowship Hall of the Monterey Meetinghouse at 6 p.m. All are welcome; please bring a dish to share with a serving utensil and a plate and silverware for yourself.

Birth Announcement: Ian Shawn Tryon

Congratulations to Shawn Tryon and Carly Detterman-Tryon of Sandisfield Road on the birth of their son Ian Shawn Tryon, born at home on September 5, and checking in at 5 lbs 15 ozs. and 19½ inches.



From the Tax Collector

The fiscal year 2008 Real Estate and Personal Property second quarter tax bills have been mailed and are due **November 1, 2007**. If you do not receive your bill, please contact the tax collector's office (413-528-1443 x117). Taxpayers who paid the second quarter with their first quarter payment will not be receiving bills. Payments may be mailed to PO Box 241, Monterey, MA 01245, or brought to the town hall. The Tax Collector's office hours are Tuesday and Saturday mornings from 9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Payments may also be left with the interdepartmental secretary when the Tax Collector's office is closed.

Bidwell House Pumpkin Fest

The First Annual Pumpkin Fest at the Bidwell House Museum has been announced by President Kathryn Roberts to be held on Saturday, October 6, from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. at 100 Art School Road in Monterey. "This is a Family Event for children and adults of all ages," said Roberts. The Garden Angels, a group of volunteers who have worked on the colonial heirloom garden and the flower gardens around the 1750 saltbox will host the activities for the day, under the direction of Ruth Green, chairperson of the Pumpkin Festivities.

The garden harvest and a pumpkin food tasting will be held for everyone. Pumpkin recipes for muffins, soup, roasted pumpkin with garlic, and dried, roasted seeds will be among the tasting offerings. Adults are encouraged to bring a sampling of your favorite pumpkin recipe to share. Children will be decorating their own pumpkin with markers and "Snilde" a pumpkin-colored Icelandic pony will be available for rides.

In addition to face painting and a hay maze, the director of the museum, Martha Dailey, will lead children to the "Enchanted Apple Tree" behind the Mahican wigwam. There, they will hear the story of Johnny Appleseed and taste apples and cider.



Martha Dailey

Wigwam at Bidwell House made by area teenagers under the direction of David McAllester—one of his last projects for the town of Monterey.

This is a free event for the community but donations to the museum will be appreciated. Tours of the Bidwell House Museum will be available on the hour from 11:00 to 3:00 at the regular visitor rates. The Bidwell House Museum summer program of events will end with the Pumpkin Fest. The museum will close for the season on Columbus Day. Please visit www.bidwellhousemuseum.org or call 413 528 6888 for more information.

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What a Lovely Day It Was

It was balmy. It was breezy. It was beautiful. Atmospheric conditions smiled on us as we celebrated Monterey Lights the Way ... Again on September 1 with a parade, picnic lunch, environmental displays, and free tours.

The parade began with an historic first—marchers set off almost on time. And what a parade! Hybrid cars. Goats. Llamas. Horses. Dogs. Chickens. Even a pair of young oxen. People on foot, people on bicycles, people with flying fish, people with reusable bags and power packs, people with clotheslines, people dressed up in funny costumes, people with banners. Not to mention the music! After all, what's a parade without a band?

Everyone in town who wasn't in the parade watched it in the center of town. Parade czarina Ellen Pearson moderated from the church steps, and Rev. Elizabeth Goodman blessed the event.

The parade ended at the Firehouse Pavilion where board members and volunteers from Gould Farm served a delicious lunch. Steve Pullen of Greenhaven Farm sold large slices of a variety of his delicious pies for dessert.

A 3-piece band, courtesy of the Cultural Council, played in the distance. Environmental exhibitors included Dave Clark from Berkshire Bike & Board,



Susan Sellev

Pie Man = Steve Pullen. QED.

Nina Marks from Project Native, Rebecca Knights and Todd Ennis from Berkshire Photovoltaic Systems, Laura Dubester and Alan Silverstein from CET, George Wislocki representing Berkshire Grown, Melissa Preston of Honey Hill Llamas, and a variety of knowledgeable members of Friends of Lake Garfield.

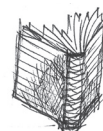
At 1:00 p.m., Del and Christine Martin gave an informative and personal tour of their completely off-the-grid home to a good-size group of people wishing and

hoping that they could do likewise. At the same time Kenn Basler, representing the Monterey Preservation Land Trust, led a 75-minute tour of an apple orchard on conserved land on Route 23 and Eaton Road. The dozen or more participants enjoyed the apple trees, Kenn's beehives, and learning about the importance of land conservation.

At 2:00 free tours of the Bidwell House Museum began, with dozens of adults and children learning about colonial America right here in Monterey. Simultaneously, Roberts Woods Farm held an open house where many children enjoyed rides on the Icelandic horses bred by the Roberts and Brian Puntin.

It was a grand I Love Monterey Day. Thanks to everyone who helped organize, marched, prepared food, ate food, exhibited, toured, and learned to love Monterey even more than before.

— Laurily Epstein



Library Notes

The youth book discussion group will be meeting October 1st at 7 p.m. Plan ahead for the second meeting on November 5th. Please call Franny Huberman for further information, 528-5414.

Denise Andrus will present her next story and a craft for young children on October 27th at 10:30 a.m. You can imagine what will be the theme since it's only a few days before Halloween. We even had some children showing up in costume last year for that Halloween program!

Thanks to the Southern Berkshire Volunteer Ambulance Squad for donating a DVD and an interactive teddy bear that will teach parents and other family members how to perform CPR on infants. Feel free to borrow this— you never know when you could help save a life!

Thanks to all who helped with the book sale Labor Day weekend. The money raised from that will be used for, among other things, programming for the children in the summer.

— Mark Makuc, Library Director

THE MONTEREY GENERAL STORE

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OCT

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Lake Garfield Drawdown

The Lake Garfield drawdown will start on October 15. All boats should be out by then. The Town Beach will be installed on June 15, 2008, and all local boats are requested to be in the lake by that date.

I appreciate your excellent cooperation with our present situation this year.

This has not been an easy year regarding boats in Lake Garfield regarding ramping, moorings, rafts, and other actions by users of the lake. However, most boaters have been very cooperative and helpful as well as observing rules of safe boating this season.

Thanks again for your cooperation.

— Dean P. Amidon,

Deputy Harbormaster for Lake Garfield

High Scores on Lake IQ Test

On I Love Monterey day, the Friends of Lake Garfield had a “Lake IQ Test” available, with prizes for the first three all-correct answer sheets turned in. Seventeen people took the test, and ten were winners. Those who lost had only one to three wrong. Looks like we’re really learning, folks. According to the sheets, prizewinners were Eve LaBelle, Hana Levy, and Del Martin.

The test is in the next column.

— Pat Edelstein, for FLG

Answers to the “Lake Garfield IQ” Test

1. Fertilizing your lawn makes the lake healthy.

False. Fertilizer is washed into the lake by rainstorms and encourages plant growth in the water.

2. Deep drawdown of the lake minimizes weed growth in the next year.

True. Exposing the weeds to freezing and thawing uproots them.

3. Lawns that go down to the shore encourage geese and their droppings.

True. Geese need to see the water to feel safe.

4. Swimmers are safest when they stay within 150 feet of the shore and wear brightly colored caps.

True. Boaters cannot see swimmers without caps or even with white caps.

5. Purple loosestrife is a problematic plant because it is too hard to grow. *False. Loosestrife grows and multiplies rapidly without controls.*

6. Septic tanks never need pumping out. *False. Septic tanks, especially in seasonal homes, need pumping every 2 to 3 years.*

7. Cool lakes with some plants, but without algae, provide good fishing.

True. Algae grow in warmer water where there are nutrients, and when it blooms it disturbs the oxygen balance the fish need.

8. Boats towing water skiers need both a driver and a spotter.

True. A spotter is needed to watch the skier at all times.

9. Exotic plants and wildlife enter lakes on boat props, bilges, and bottoms.

True. Boats that are put into lakes may carry unwanted “hitchhikers” along with them, and spread infection.

10. High phosphorus detergents/cleaners improve the quality of lake water.

False. Phosphorus feeds the weeds, just like fertilizer, and harms water quality.

11. Bonus Question:

Planting low shrubs and plants at the water’s edge discourages geese because they won’t come and stay where they cannot see the water.

True. Planting low shrubs so the geese cannot see open water discourages them from browsing (and “pooping”) on lawns.



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**Conservation/Preservation/
Restoration**

From the Meetinghouse

A United Church of Christ congregation in Chicago of a few thousand members recently took on a contentious issue that was being debated among legislators. I don't remember what the issue was, and I don't remember what stance the congregation took. What I do remember is that they took a stand. And when they did, what social power they could exercise! Such a large group of people acting in agreement, they changed history, no less so for my not remembering exactly how. That's my shortcoming, not theirs.

The subject of this congregation came up once when I was talking with other Berkshire County UCC clergy. It inspired us to admiration, and then lament. One pastor, serving a hill town village church not unlike the one I serve here in Monterey, said, "How did the pastor of that church manage such a thing? Talk about leadership! My congregation has sixty members, and I can't get them to agree on anything, let alone one of the big issues of the day. Iraq? Gay marriage? Gun control? Forget about it. We're worried about whether the town can use the church parking lot during the week."

One of the big topics in all of scripture is hospitality. From Abraham and Sarah to Paul and the newly born church, the great heroes of the Bible are people who live out hospitality. It's a concept that we assume is simple enough; we tend to think we get it. "Make yourself at home," is how we might put it when inviting people into our homes for a visit. But even when doing so, we also assume that certain social conventions will be upheld—invited guests will abide by the conventions of the host; people will mind their manners and make polite talk. Yet, hospitality is more radical than this. Biblical hospitality is love for a stranger. That's how Fred Craddock, the great preacher, translates the Greek word so often translated "hospitality." It's a striking difference: whereas a standard translation of Hebrews 13: 1-2 would read, "Let mutual love continue; do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers," Craddock translates it, "Let love of brother and sister continue; do not forget love of a stranger." What I appreciate about this translation is that it highlights the importance of letting the stranger be a stranger to us and yet still one whom we love.

I think there are all sorts of socially acceptable, and very subtle, ways that we obliterate the strangeness that dwells between people. Simple good manners usually amount to this. But there are other ways, too. I once worked with a woman who had a powerful and charismatic personality. She was tall and good looking and very smart; she came on strong and was something of a thrill ride to be with. To top it off, she had a habit of speech that was inviting at first. "Right?" she would ask as punctuation in conversation, though never wait for the other person to respond. And as the one she was talking to, you found yourself the member of an exclusive club, made up of you and her and maybe a few others who knew that the things she thought were funny really were funny, right? and the things she thought were upsetting really were upsetting, right? and the things she thought were true really were true, right? It was a terrific club to be a member of, until I began to realize that was an even more exclusive club than I had first thought, for it was exclusive of me as one who sometimes longed to respond to her assumed "Right?" with a simple "Wrong" or "No" or "I see it differently," all of which would have been to say, "In this way, I am a stranger to you, and you are stranger to me, and we don't need to be afraid of that."

Sad to say, the church as a whole has become masterful at the sort of hospitality that assumes it is right. "All are welcome" it proclaims, but then come the caveats of what each of us must do in order really to join, in order really to be acceptable, in order really to be loved. In many cases, the caveats are explicitly stated, in creeds and qualifications for membership. In others, it's communicated through the culture—of what *we* believe, what *we* stand for. Eventually, that group of clergy I was talking with stumbled on this understanding when we remembered that a three-thousand

member urban church has it easy in at least this way: it's a self-selected group. In a city such as Chicago, if you don't like what's happening at the United Church of Christ congregation, you can take the train to the next stop and worship with the Lutherans or the Pentecostals or the Catholics or the Buddhists. Of course, with cars, we face a similar array of choices even in such a rural setting as this.

But at the heart of these hill-town congregations of sixty members—or sixteen members—lies a different challenge. Ours is not necessarily to act in discerned consensus to be a force for systemic change. Ours is to gather together even in conflict to live out hospitality. Ours is to gather together with people who are known to us and yet who are strangers to us, and further to let that strangeness remain. In sum, ours is to love.

This is to say that we of this tiny congregation don't gather together on Sunday morning because we agree with one another. Indeed, we don't gather in order to agree with one another. We gather to love one another—both within and beyond the walls of our sanctuary. Let me be clear: I don't write this with some romantic notion in mind of what love feels like and what love can do. I also don't write this as if we have accomplished our task. I write this knowing that such love as God is and calls us to is difficult and challenging, is sometimes trying and even painful; it calls us out of where we're comfortable into places that are strange to us, that might upset us or even frighten us. Nonetheless, this is the commandment we are inspired to live by: that we love God with all our heart and mind and soul and strength, and that we love our neighbors—however strange they are to us—as ourselves. And in this spirit, we invite any who would join us in this challenge to come, for all, with God's help, truly are welcome.

— Elizabeth Goodman

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Center for Peace through Culture Opens New Office

The Center for Peace Through Culture (CPC) is an international, nonprofit, educational organization based in Monterey, but having members throughout the United States, Canada, England, and Italy. The goal of CPC is to promote a psychology of peace that focuses on the identification of belief systems that create conflict and division among people, and working to transform them into attitudes of inclusion and acceptance. The Center for Peace Through Culture is committed to developing and working with innovative approaches to community building among diverse societies, both locally and internationally.

CPC believes that a culture of peace develops through psychological changes and understanding that gradually dissolve the boundaries of nationality, race, religion, gender, age, and ideology. CPC envisions a culture of peace as a manifestation of the creative spirit that unites humanity. To this purpose, CPC strives to bring people together from the various arts, sciences, and philosophies, and from diverse cultures, to creatively address the issues of the world that cause conflict and suffering.

A Bit of History:

The Center For Peace Through Culture was first founded in 1978 in New York City and maintained a full schedule of

public events and projects until 1990, when it went dormant for economic reasons. Activities included forums, conferences, workshops, exhibitions, a summer camp for inner city children, an annual peace fair, participation in the founding of Earth Day, and inspiring the first recycling efforts in New York City. Projects were designed by collaborative efforts among artists, scientists, and philosophers.

After 9/11, one of the original CPC founders, along with other former members from all over the country, decided the time was right to begin again. They revisited the concepts of the original organization, finding them still valid in today's world, but refocused the new CPC to concentrate on the psychology of peace as a key to bridging the differences between various cultures.

CPC was incorporated in Massachusetts and is now up and running, with its headquarters in Monterey. Local board members include Judy Bach, Barbara Boughton, Kathie Frome, Nanette Hucknall, Laraine Lippe, and Joan MacVicar.

Current Projects:

- The new *CPC* has created several workshops that have been presented around the country and has also posted interactive webshops on CPC's website, centerforpeacethroughculture.org.

- The *Beliefs Workshop*, designed to help participants explore and understand their personal beliefs and how they affect their lives and relationships, was adapted for use in the school systems by Steve

Small, a former Monterey resident and newly retired teacher from Undermountain School in Sheffield. Last spring, with a grant from the Berkshire Taconic Foundation, Steve prepared and presented the workshop in his classroom, and he will continue to develop it for future use in other schools around the country.

- This September, CPC launched a new program called GreenAgers, whose purpose is to mobilize and empower young people to come together and work cooperatively in designing and executing projects related to environmental issues within their local communities. Brenda Mathisen, a dynamic young woman and recent graduate of Simon's Rock College, has been chosen to direct this program. A CPC office at 37 Rosseter Street P5 in Great Barrington has been opened as a base for GreenAgers activities. Brenda will be busy recruiting young people and helping them to focus their creative, mental, and physical energies on environmental projects of their choosing. She will also be writing grant proposals and networking with environmentally interested adults, businesses, and organizations.

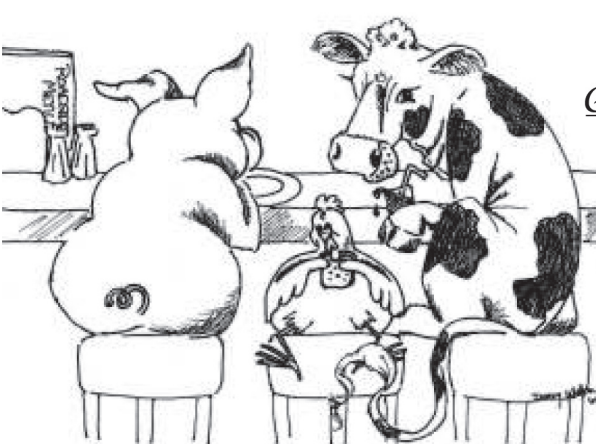
- The most recently conceived CPC project is a cooperative effort between The Center for Peace Through Culture and African Action on AIDS (headquarters in Yaoundé, Cameroon). CPC will be sponsoring two speaking engagements, given by Dr. Ruth Bamela Engo-Tjega, the President of African Action on AIDS, and former Senior Economic Affairs Officer for Africa at the United Nations. One of these engagements will be at the Monterey Community Dinner on Wednesday, November 14. Dr. Engo will present slides and talk about her work in Sub-Saharan Africa. It is hoped that interest will be generated here in Monterey for future interaction with Dr. Engo and African Action on AIDS. Look for more on this event in the November *Monterey News*.

If you have any questions about The Center for Peace Through Culture, or if you are interested in participating in one of our projects, you can contact Kathie Frome at 528-2516. You can also visit our website (centerforpeacethroughculture.org); and we hope to see you at the Community Dinner in November.

— Kathie Frome

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Little Green (Native) Invaders

In the heart of our farm we have experienced an invasion. For the first time in more than thirty years we find ourselves home to a rapidly multiplying population of *Lemna minor*: they are tiny, they are green, they can double their numbers every two and a half days, and cover an acre of the homeland in less than a month. They have lived in these parts way longer than we have, but this is the first time they have taken over our little garden pool.

To set the scene: this pool came from K-Mart when the kids (now grown and gone) were little. It cost \$8 and is three feet across, bright blue, with mermaids and such painted on the inside. The mermaids have not been seen in some years. Originally it served to keep the kids happy while I worked in the garden. I'd put a few inches of water in it and they would splash around for a short time while I did a little agriculture.

Now the kids live in Boston but the pool remains. It is a fixture in the garden, with mint and asters growing around it, making a shady home for frogs and salamanders. Also it is a handy place to give the carrots their first rinse before bringing them into the kitchen. Over the years a homegrown soft muck of carrot rinsings and old aster leaves has formed at the bottom of the pool. Tadpoles disappear into it. I've installed a few rocks so the froggies can easily get up out of the water when they want to, also so the bees can get down for a drink without being swept away. The K-Mart pool has

been a safe and predictable environment for all sorts of creatures, most too small for me to see easily, but it has not been home to much in the way of plants, other than the drooping asters, sedums, black-eyed Susans, and whatever else crops up around the edges.

This year all that has changed. It was sharp young eyes from Boston, out for a visit: "Whoa, Mom! How did duckweed get into the garden pool?"

We may never know. After the first little floating duckweeds were spotted in June, the population took off. By August the pool was completely topped in bright green. The frogs, who like to sit half in and half out, became bright green above

of it?" Her assumption was that a surface of duckweed is a no-good thing — after all, she hadn't seen it before.

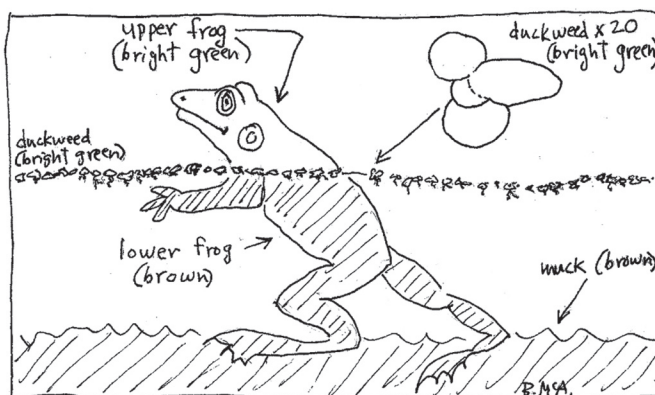
Maybe the local heron has a tougher time spotting fish and frogs. This could be seen as a no-good thing for the heron, but it's different from the point of view of the fish and frogs.

What is it about a new look, a change in color, that makes us cry, "Invasion! Aliens!" We rush for the herbicides, build walls. I've read that an initial square-inch of duckweed can cover an acre in 55 days. Though it blooms in the summer, its usual method of reproduction is by basal division or "budding off." When you see a teeny floating green oval of duckweed, with its

little "rootlets" hanging down, that is one plant. Keep looking and it may become a two-lobed oval, or three or four. This is the original thallus dividing into two parts, and then more and more.

Duckweed is a member of the order Arales, which comprises the families Araceae and the Lemnaceae. The Lems (for short) family contains the smallest known flowering plants.

There are only 6 genera, with 30 species. In case you have traveled far from your most recent taxonomy course, the genus is the first of the two Latin words in a scientific name: *Felis* for most cats, *Canis* for many dog types. The duckweeds in our pool are *Lemna minor*, a small species. There are bigger ones, but not by much. What makes the duckweeds "big" is numbers. They are gobbled up by the herbivores of the shallow waters



and dark brownish below, like shirt and pants for a wetland party. From the waist down they matched the underwater world, but the shirt above was perfect camouflage for the brilliant duckweed.

Back in early summer I visited a friend in Columbia County. She has a small dug pond lots bigger than mine. It was already covered with bright green duckweed. She asked, "What can I do? How do I get rid

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(my grown-up frogs are not herbivores, but as tadpoles they were), so the plants have to reproduce quickly to keep up with the browsers.

In a larger, still-water, shallow environment, like the east end of Lake Garfield for instance, the duckweeds exist in balance with other native plants and animals. They do not expand to cover acre after acre, but maintain a stable population which supports other aquatic life, both vertebrates and invertebrates. This year the duckweed in Lake Garfield, along with most of the other aquatic plants, has died.

Is it a million ducks and tadpoles, out of control, driving down their own food supply? Is it illness? Is it some introduced population knocking the native species out of its niche? Will we still have ducks and frogs in the lake, now that forces unknown have done in the pondweeds?

How long will it take the duckweeds to stage a comeback, maybe with a little help from the East Monterey Friends of Duckweed Association? When is "a little help" harmful tampering and likely to upset the balance more than ever?

Do I think these are important questions or that duckweed even matters, given the collapse of the polar ice caps and the Iraqi government's decision to toss our hired mercenaries out of their country? Yes, I do. To me it all boils down to how we see ourselves in the world. Where did we get the idea our scientific name was *Homo dominus*?

— Bonner J. McAllester

A Sculling Moment

It began on a summery but unsettled September evening. Dead air and a mirror-calm Lake Garfield belied threatening skies, while mist rose from the water and ominous vertical clouds hung darkly over the surrounding Berkshire hills.

I stood on my patio, mesmerized at the surreal picture before me, until the lure of the lakeshore drew me near. As I approached, my lime-green scull gleamed invitingly in the eerie twilight. Heedless of the impending storm, I lifted the long, narrow boat from its rack and quietly eased it into still water, feeling very much as though I was entering a spacious, unoccupied cathedral.

The scull seemed to want to move even before I coiled for the first catch. I rowed to the muted sounds of softly chirping crickets and the surprisingly delicate splash of my oars.

Gradually I began to feel that my progress was free of muscular effort, independent of my body. The boat floated not on the water but above it. Time slowed. Familiar landmarks blurred while I focused on the perfect trail of parallel bubbles in my wake. The formidable bulk of Bullhead Rock went unnoticed. Ducks paddled effortlessly away from the scull's path. On the shore, graceful birches bowed as I passed. At the lake's far end I slowed in the ebbing light, crafted a leisurely

360-degree turn, and absorbed the long, northerly view and the stunning beauty all around me.

By the time I rowed back to my cove it had already turned dark. The forty-pound scull lifted feather-light from the water, then shivered in contentment as I replaced it on its rack and hosed it down. Caressing its hull, I bid it goodnight, wistful that there might one day be another row like the one on this magical September eve. I laid in the long oars, musing in wonder at how the skies had held their fury during my row. Only then did I notice a quickening wind and the wall of rain dancing its way across the lake. Turning to face the oncoming storm, I opened my arms to acknowledge its considerate delay, and, breathing deeply of the rain-scented night air, returned to the welcoming lights of home.

— David Shiffrin

Conflict of Interest Seminar

The State Ethics Commission is presenting an educational seminar about the conflict of interest law in Monterey on Tuesday, November 20 at 6:00 p.m. You are cordially invited to attend.

The seminar is for interested citizens, elected officials, and town employees. Municipal Education Specialist Kristina Patyjewicz will be the spokesperson for the Commission. Please let Linda Thorpe, 528-2164, know if you will be attending.

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Return of the Wild

The deciduous faces of the Berkshire Mountains are once again painted with autumnal brilliance, a spectacle that draws leaf peepers from far and near. But perhaps the greatest show for those of us who look closer into the forest and open is the almost daily presence of big game, right here in our own backyards. A number of the species announcing their return in the past decade are wild turkeys, black bears, coyotes, beavers, white tail deer, and, more recently, catamounts, also called mountain lions.

It has been all of ten years since I first dared to submit an article to the *Monterey News* with a drawing simulating a mountain lion sighted crossing Route 23 ahead of a car and heading up the steep boulder-strewn face of Butternut overlook, across from the ski resort. Many readers shook their heads, I am sure, but a local and colorful trapper, Ernie Beckwith, came forth to report a lion seen up on East Mountain, not far away, and not long before that. We became friends right away.

Yesterday I pulled a book out of my library to research the habits of this fourth-largest cat in the world, entitled *Wild Animals At Home* by Ernest Thompson Seton. This book may have belonged to David McAllester, according to the dealer in Great Barrington I bought it from. I just noticed that the inside cover page was personalized with the handwritten notation "To Boy, from Dad" and dated February 14, 1916. On page 189 in the chapter entitled "Sneak Cats," the lion



is characterized as the shyest creature in the woods. Consistently camera shy, it is an adept climber. Perched up on huge boulders or in trees, it waits for prey, while keeping humans at a distance.

Even experienced park rangers have rarely seen one, but some have the uncanny feeling that at least one has seen them. Like other wild felines, catamounts are curious creatures, and tracks have later been found indicating they were following rangers at a distance, just to be sure they were leaving the forest. In the last conversation I had with David McAllester just before he died, I told him that the then Monterey Animal

Control Officer had seen a mountain lion coming out of David's property near the big rocks, crossing Route 23 with just one leap to the center of the road and another into the brush on the other side. This performance has since been reported numerous times on Route 8 and Tyringham Road as well.

David was very pleased with my call and exclaimed "How exciting," later writing me a thank-you note for the update. Well, David, to follow in your footsteps as nature writer for the *Monterey News*, this article is for you.

— George Emmons



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Life on the Highway

I was not enthralled when I heard about our plan to drive west for the summer. I knew large doses of packing and planning were in store, neither of which I enjoyed. Above all, I wondered. How would our family cope with thousands of miles in the car when I considered Boston a long drive away? Were the national parks as wonderful as everyone said they were? Would our trip have a detrimental impact on the global environment? Would our cat recognize us when we returned?

Then came June 25th, the big day. At 8:15 a.m., we left Monterey, our cat, and our friends behind for our six-week drive across the continent. The first day went surprisingly well. I even found I did not mind traveling 600 miles in one day. It felt different than going to Boston, because every place we went was exciting and new, with interesting things to see, and interesting people. As we went south the weather grew warmer and we started seeing church billboards with messages like "Stop, Drop, & Roll Doesn't Work in Hell."

Mammoth Cave in Kentucky erased my national park doubts. It was fabulous. The interior of the cave held yawning canyons, majestic domes, and delicate, colorful stalactites and stalagmites. In fact, as the trip continued, the national parks we visited grew increasingly wondrous and beautiful.

Following Mammoth Cave, we experienced materialism at its worst. Our next stop was Nashville, where my father attended a national school nurses conference at the Gaylord Opryland Resort and Convention Center. It had over 10,000 rooms, numerous shops, restaurants, and spas, as well as nine indoor acres and dozens more outside. Also featured were two indoor tropical gardens, a

shopping mall, golf courses, and an indoor river. This immense misuse of resources to "rejuvenate" people disgusted me. Thankfully, we left as soon as possible.

The greatest stretch of driving still lay ahead. We covered the distance from Nashville to western Colorado from June 30th to July 4th, subsisting off sandwiches, and traveling as much as 400 miles in a day. The vast tracts of prairie did not bore us. They were quite interesting, containing myriad oil wells and gentle hillocks on which cattle grazed.

Then, a day later, the Rockies seemed to rise up in front of us. These towering peaks may have brought us our next problem: sickness. As we drove through an alpine world, my sister was constantly feverish and fatigued. Whether it was altitude sickness or a simple virus, we do not know. However, it seemed to get better as soon as we entered Utah's parched lands.

To say the Southwest was warm might be an understatement. Low scrubby plants blanketed the ground, which was cracked from lack of rain. In Arches National Park, the heat grew more intense. Even around sunset, the temperature hovered at 100 degrees, making a three-mile hike seem like a six-mile labor. A hot wind blew constantly, and as night fell, heat lightning illuminated the horizon. Cacti and desert reptiles were prevalent. Signs advised us to drink four liters of water a day, increase our salt intake substantially, protect our skin from the sun, never stray from the trail, and beware of rattlesnakes. The blistering heat did not let up, reaching 100 in Navajo Nation, attaining 95 at the Grand Canyon, scorching us with 110 in Nevada, and peaking at 120 in Death Valley.

The weather cooled down as we left the desert and reached the pleasant Pacific coast, a land of colossal trees and

gargantuan sand dunes. However, the weather became unpleasant again when we entered Washington State. Icy rain battered us and a damp mist hung low over the saturated soil. Temperatures were dipping, going as low as 40 as we trudged through elegant moss-draped forests abundant with ferns.

We were happy to be dry once more as we scaled the Cascade Range and hiked among crystal-clear lakes. This did not last, for soon we were off in our car on another bout of driving. In one day, we drove from Washington to southern Montana, in another, 300 miles across South Dakota and into Minnesota. Geysers erupted, waterfalls rushed, and mud pots gurgled in Yellowstone. Prairie dogs could be seen squeaking and chattering across Wyoming and South Dakota, wagging their tails incessantly while herds of bison roamed the horizon.

Even though the scenery was beautiful as we reached the Great Lakes, homesickness began to set in. We drove home as fast as we could, at one point driving until 1:20 a.m. in a frenzy to return to Monterey. When we saw our gray house and pulled into the driveway, my sister and I leapt out of our Honda Element and kissed the sweet ground of our yard. Our cat ran over, purring and rubbing against the car. It was a trip to remember, but arriving home was the best part.

— Jonah Carlson

*
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Letter from Home

How Does Our Garden Grow?

By the time you read this, I will be in another country, far from our paradise in the Berkshires. I've spent twenty years here, essentially my entire life. Monterey is a haven for me, a place full of familiar places, sights, smells, and memories. I return here during the school year, whether seven times or once, in order to reflect, relax, and get my head on straight again. While driving home from Middlebury I find myself always silently cheering when I hit the Massachusetts border, but I rarely spend more than two weeks here anymore. When I decided to do my junior year abroad that meant I had an extra six weeks at home after my full summer in Washington D.C., and I spent that time visiting with family and friends, and working at the General Store. It was the longest amount of time I've spent at home since I left for college, and I began to notice a few things I've been missing.

Housing developments around Lake Garfield are becoming common; if you drive along Hupi or Mt. Hunger Road you will see many lots that are extensively developed. These roads are not the only example of what is happening, but they are the ones I am more familiar with. The

buildings and acreage vary in size; some houses are nestled into the surrounding environment, whereas others boldly make their presence known. The natural environment in Monterey draws people, almost like moths to a light. The town's offerings are a seductive lure, whether you grew up here or are seeking a place of escape.

Growing up on a goat farm, I've seen a variety of connections between nature, animals, and human tendencies. Take for example a garden. In the spring, seeds and small plants are put in the earth; all are roughly the same size. Over the summer months, they reach mature dimensions and some, through inherent growth patterns, begin to spread into others' space. No matter where the roots of a pumpkin plant are put down, the plant spreads everywhere, showing how difficult it is to welcome a variety of vegetation into limited garden space without losing a certain invaluable equilibrium. A harmonious balance is what allows each plant to produce to its highest potential. Perhaps at times there is a sentiment that the extensive building throughout Monterey is like the extravagant growth of those pumpkin plants.

The goats are entertaining; as playful creatures they embody an element of humor, but when they play queen of the mountain it seems almost as if they are playing for real. Shanti fights to achieve the highest peak, yet she barely makes her

claim before being pushed aside and seeing a new face above her. The goats' playful banter on top of a rock pile reminds me of the human tendency to try to outpace one another. Many times, the rest of the goats actually seem to enjoy themselves on the tiers below the queen of the mountain, and with less effort. I am merely suggesting that at times houses can be constructed beyond an appropriate functional purpose due to unexamined influences.

Those who buy and build homes in Monterey are held to certain building regulations. These rules have allowed an extensive amount of land clearing, altering the natural landscape. I understand and respect people's right to build what they desire on their own land. However, I wonder if there might not be some adjustments to encourage more thoughtful and respectful building. For example, while the Scenic Mountain Act of 2003 appears to permit "vista pruning," defined as a selective thinning of tree branches, it "does not include the cutting of trees." There is clearly more complexity to this statement outlined within the eighteen-page act because a good number of lots have been extensively cleared. Is there not a way to have a beautiful breathtaking view and still preserve others' individual views?



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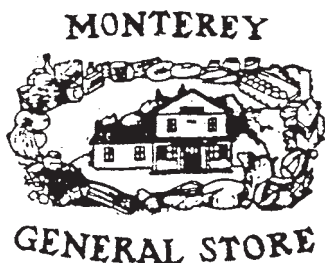
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Those responsible for overseeing land sales and building construction are probably doing as much enforcement as they can. No one is doing anything illegal by building and developing, and it is part of human nature to strive for a dream escape, one more perfect than those around them. It is natural for those in the business of building to urge their clients to go one step higher and bigger. But what happens now to the lots void of trees, and where does the energy supply to build and maintain come from in the end? I would like to know how those pumpkins have gotten so big and sprawling; I am curious why some houses seem so out of place for their location in this gentle hamlet of western Massachusetts.

Perhaps in hoping for a re-examination of regulations and more discussion I am being overly optimistic. Personally I know how very blessed I am to have this place to come home to. In ten or fifteen years, I would like to be able to drive on the same roads and recognize the same beauty and perfection that has brought so many others here in the past and that I hope will continue to do so in the future.

— Tarsi Dunlop



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Georgia Rule
Black Book
Gracie
Ten Canoes
Two Weeks
Year of the Dog
National Geographics
Gabon: The Last Eden
Engineering the Impossible

Fiction

Exit Ghost, Phillip Roth
Trespass, Valerie Martin
High Season, Jon Loomis
Dead Heat, Dick Francis
47th Samurai, Stephen Hunter
Tree of Smoke, Denis Johnson

Nonfiction

Clark Brothers Collect Impressionists,
Michael Conforti
Zookeeper's Wife, Diane Ackerman
Coldest Winter, David Halberstam

Children's

Iron Thunder, Avi
Eager, Helen Fox
Amanda Pig, First Grader, Jean Van
Leeuwen
Gathering, Anne Enright

Remembering Jim Michelman

We were sorry to learn of the recent death of Jim Michelman of New Marlborough, a real Renaissance man and longtime contributor of poetry to the *News*. Here is the last poem he submitted, which was first printed in the November 2006 issue. We will miss him and his intelligent and deft craftsmanship.

To The Artist

*Yellow and lavender; wan rose.
These pallid tints go paler in the mind
of him, who striving, beaten
by the icy rains of middle March,
cannot remember Spring. But the artist's
mind.
Even in the rain-washed winds the
flicker
of a glow. She, who could not do other-
wise,
fans flicker to rose and yellow; lavender
— strong hues. And he, confused among
the howlings,
is salvaged entirely in the blessing of
her art.*



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It's Not Easy Being Green

At our initial Monterey Lights the Way ... Again parade committee meeting, the notion came up that something lasting more than just a day should evolve from our efforts. And thus begins a monthly column highlighting the experiences of friends and neighbors in Monterey as we try to live in a more environmentally responsible fashion. Part of our September 1st celebration included creating a "Green Honor Roll" to note those who drive hybrid cars, have enrolled in GreenStart, and engage in other creative activities that "reduce our carbon footprint." We know we missed some of you, so when you read this list, please let us know who and what we've omitted. You can call 528-0577 or email lauryepstein@gmail.com with your updates. And if you're interested in writing a brief article about how you're greening up your life, please let us know.

Monterey Green Honor Roll

Judy Bach, hybrid car

Joe Baker and Bonner McAllister, passive solar, photovoltaic, solar for domestic hot water, gravity fed water system, root cellar and barnyard, compost toilet, wood heat, GreenStart

Maureen and Michael Banner, photovoltaic panels

Bob Carlson and Franny Huberman, wood heat

Kenn and Kate Basler, wood heat, GreenStart

Janet Cathcart, GreenStart

Laurily Epstein, photovoltaic, GreenStart

Ellen Farris, GreenStart

Gould Farm, photovoltaic, outdoor wood furnace

Grenadier Pottery, GreenStart

Alice O. Howell, GreenStart

John Humphrey, hybrid car, GreenStart

Carol Husten, GreenStart

Colta and Gary Ives, hand reel mower and scythe, GreenStart

Susan and Norman Ladov, GreenStart

Nelly and Sheldo Langley, Green Start

Anita Linden, GreenStart

Will Marsh and Glynis Oliver, hybrid car, hand reel mower and scythe, GreenStart

Christine and Del Martin, passive solar, photovoltaic array, wind generator, rainwater/ram pump watering system, wood heat

Shirley and Storrs Olds, hybrid car, wood heat, GreenStart

Ellen Pearson, hybrid car, compost toilet, GreenStart

Charles Pierce and John Farrell, GreenStart

Kyle Pierce, hybrid car, GreenStart

Gisele Pinck and Kathy Coyle, GreenStart

Susan Popper and Rocky Greenberg, GreenStart

Maria Reveley and Phil Kampe, hybrid car

Kathryn and Marc Roberts, GreenStart

Joyce and Lew Scheffey, two hybrid cars, GreenStart

Jon Sylbert and Lisa Smyle, GreenStart

Meta Ukena, hybrid car, GreenStart

Evelyn and Peter Vallianos, hybrid car, GreenStart

Remember—if your name isn't on this list and it should be, please let us know!

— Laurily Epstein

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Calendar

Every Monday (exc. holidays): Select Board meeting, 8:30 a.m.

Wednesday Night Farmers' Market: 4-7 p.m., sponsored by Community Health Programs, at The Nutrition Center, 94 West Avenue, Great Barrington. Fresh local and organic produce from local farms.

Every Friday & Saturday in October: Music nights at Monterey General Store. See ad, p. 12.

October 2, 4, 9, 11: Tuesday & Thursday evenings, pre-Firemen's Ball dancing and tune-up, 6:45 p.m., Firehouse.

Saturday, October 6: First Annual Pumpkin Festival, 10 a.m.-1 p.m., Bidwell House Museum. See p. 11.

Monday, October 8: Columbus Day, Town offices and Library closed.

Wednesday, October 19: Community Potluck Dinner, 6 p.m., Meetinghouse.

Thursday, October 11: Free Blood Pressure Clinic, 2 p.m., Town Hall.

Contributors

We thank the following folks for their recent contributions.

Dianna & Dennis Downing
Richard & Louise Skolnick
Martin Cherneff
Elizabeth M. Wolff
Charles Pierce
Bernie & Laurie Student

Saturday, October 13: 8th Annual Firemen's Ball, 6 p.m., Monterey Firehouse. \$45 per couple. See p. 10.

Monday, October 15: Deadline for Cultural Council grant applications. See p. 10.

Lake Garfield drawdown begins.

Tuesday, October 16: Free Health Screening, CHP, 10 a.m., Town Hall.

Saturday, October 27: Denise Andrus presents stories and crafts for children, 10:30 a.m., Library.

Wednesday, October 31: Halloween, Monterey Trick or Treat hours 5 to 7 p.m.

The Observer

August 26-September 25

High temp. (9/7, 8)..... 85°
Low temp. (9/17) 35°
Avg. high temp. 75.2°
Avg. low temp. 51.6°
Avg. temp. 63.4°
Total rainfall..... 1.54 in.
Rainfall occurred on 8 days.

P.O. Box 9, 01245

Thanks to Police & Firemen

To the Editor:

Monterey has always been a special town and my summer home for the last 50 years. Recently my mom took ill and we had to call 911. The response was immediate, with police officer Joe arriving first. Then Chief Ray Tryon and his wonderful team. Everyone's attention and knowledge was first rate and reassuring.

I want to thank everyone for their compassion and professional service. Monterey is to be commended! We are all lucky to live here.

PS: my mom checked out fine and is back home with us.

— Janet Feldman

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Contributions from local artists this month:
Maureen Banner, pp. 9, 11, 12; George Emmons, p. 18;
Bonner McAllester, p. 16.

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